

Message Text

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SUBJECT: PRESS COVERAGE OF THE INVESTIGATION OF CHARGES AGAINST
FORMER AMBASSADOR TASCA

REF: ATHENS 6698

1. IN THE COVERAGE OF THE INVESTIGATION OF CHARGES AGAINST
FORMER AMBASSADOR TASCA, GREEK-AMERICAN BUSINESSMAN TOM PAPPAS
AND OTHERS, INITIALLY ANNOUNCED LAST WEEK (REFTEL), SOME
NEWSPAPERS HAVE IN THEIR REPORTING TRIED TO CONSTRUE THE
STORY AS AN IMPLICATION OF WIDER USG INVOLVEMENT IN THE 1967
COUP. PROMINENT FIGURES SUCH AS CU/NF LEADER GEORGE MAVROS,
CU/NF DEPUTY GEORGE MANGAKIS, FORMER PRIME MINISTER
KANELLOPOULOS, AND PASOK CHIEF PAPANDREOU HAVE ALREADY
GIVEN TESTIMONY TO THE INVESTIGATING MAGISTRATE. APPARENTLY
NONE OF THESE INDIVIDUALS HAS PROVIDED ANY CONCRETE INFORMATION
IN SUPPORT OF ALLEGED U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN THE APRIL 1967
COUP. HOWEVER, VARIOUS PRESS STORIES HAVE PLAYED UP
SPECULATIVE COMMENTARY SUGGESTING SUCH U.S. INVOLVEMENT.

2. IN HIS TESTIMONY, MAVROS IS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID
THAT TOM PAPPAS HAD NEVER TRIED TO CONCEAL THAT HE HAD
COLLABORATED WITH THE CIA. MANY THINGS HAVE BEEN HEARD
ABOUT THE ACTIVITIES OF AMBASSADOR TASCA AND DANIEL
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BREWSTER, MAVROS REPORTED ADDED, BUT HE, HIMSELF, HAD

NO FIRST HAND KNOWLEDGE IN THIS RESPECT.

3. DEPUTY MANGAKIS, FOR HIS PART, STATED THAT HE COULD NOT TESTIFY UNDER OATH REGARDING MESSRS. TASCA AND BREWSTER, BUT SPOKE IN AN OBLIQUE FASHION OF THE ALLEGED U.S. ROLE IN PREPARING THE 1967 COUP. THE PRESS INDICATED MANGAKIS DID NOT THINK THE CHARGES AGAINST TASCA MERITED DISCUSSION, BUT THAT TOM PAPPAS SHOULD ANSWER CHARGES AGAINST HIM SINCE HE WAS A GREEK CITIZEN. HOWEVER, IN TALKING TO NEWSMEN AFTER HE TESTIFIED, THE DEPUTY CLAIMED, WITHOUT PROVIDING ANY SUBSTANTIATION, THAT A NUMBER OF U.S. GOVERNMENT AGENCIES - UNDER THE OVERALL COORDINATION AND DIRECTION OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL - BEAR RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE IMPOSITION AND MAINTENANCE OF THE DICTATORSHIP IN GREECE.

4. THE PRESS ALSO GAVE PROMINENT PLAY TO PAPANDREOU'S CHARGES THAT THE 1967 COUP WAS ORGANIZED BY THE CIA WHICH GAVE THE GO-AHEAD TO THE COLONELS. HE SUPPOSEDLY REFERRED TO THE NETWORK OF CIA AGENTS IN GREECE AND SPOKE OF TOM PAPPAS' ACTIVITIES IN GREECE SINCE 1962.

5. FINALLY, FORMER PRIME MINISTER PANAYOTIS KANELLOPOULOS WAS REPORTED TO HAVE REFUSED TO COMMENT TO JOURNALISTS ABOUT HIS MEETING WITH THE INVESTIGATING MAGISTRATE. HOWEVER, THE PRESS CLAIMED KANELLOPOULOS "LET IT BE KNOWN" THAT AS FAR AS HE WAS CONCERNED, THE SUIT BROUGHT AGAINST AMBASSADOR TASCA WAS ONE "WITHOUT SUBSTANTIVE CONTENT".

6. COMMENT: THE INVESTIGATING MAGISTRATE, APPEALS COURT JUDGE PAPAGEORGIOU, HAS NOT GIVEN ANY HINT AT WHAT HIS FINDINGS WILL BE ON THIS ESSENTIALLY NUISANCE SUIT. WHATEVER THE OUTCOME, THE RESULTANT ADVERSE IMPRESSION IS BUT ANOTHER ELEMENT IN A CONTINUUM OF ANTI-U.S. PUBLICITY AIMED AS INFLUENCING ALL TOO MALLEABLE GREEK PUBLIC OPINION.
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